

That is exactly what I intend to do on this floor every day that I can get the time and the floor to do it between now and December 31. I am going to be posting another flag each day to remind the American people that we are getting closer and closer and closer to the People's Republic of China—Communist China—controlling both ends of the Panama Canal—the country that has trampled the rights of Tibetans, that threatened to run over its peaceful protesters with tanks, that has stolen our nuclear secrets, that funneled money into our Presidential campaigns, and purchased or stolen other targeting devices to target our cities, and, frankly, threatened the country of Taiwan, and even threatened California if we step in. What do we do on the Senate floor? Not only do we let them take the canal, but we also give them most-favored-nation status.

At some point, the American people are going to have to wake up. I don't know when it is going to be. But I hope it is not too late.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as if in morning business for up to 20 minutes.

Mr. GORTON. Mr. President, we are trying to get moving on the FAA authorization bill. Will the Senator from Wisconsin agree to shorten his remarks, if we are ready to go? We are still trying to negotiate.

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I would be happy to shorten my remarks in the necessity to move forward.

Mr. GORTON. I thank the Senator for his courtesy. I have no objection.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Washington.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative assistant proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. GORTON. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. COLLINS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

AIR TRANSPORTATION

IMPROVEMENT ACT—Continued

Mr. GORTON. Madam President, I now ask unanimous consent that the substitute amendment I presented earlier today be agreed to and be considered as original text for the purpose of further amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment (No. 1891) was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 1892

(Purpose: To consolidate and revise the provisions relating to slots and slot exemptions at the 4 high-density airports)

Mr. GORTON. Madam President, I now send an amendment to the desk for myself, for Mr. ROCKEFELLER, for Mr. GRASSLEY, for Mr. HARKIN, and for Mr. ASHCROFT, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative assistant read as follows:

The Senator from Washington [Mr. GORTON], for himself, Mr. ROCKEFELLER, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. HARKIN, and Mr. ASHCROFT, proposes an amendment numbered 1892.

Mr. GORTON. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(The text of the amendment is printed in today's RECORD under "Amendments Submitted.")

Mr. GORTON. Madam President, I am going to explain this amendment in some detail, as it has been the subject of both long negotiations and much controversy internally in the Commerce Committee in the almost 7 months since the Commerce Committee bill was reported to the floor, and today.

I will say right now, for my friend and colleague from Illinois, after I have spoken on the amendment and Senator ROCKEFELLER has made any remarks on the amendment that he wishes, at the reasonable request of the Senator from Illinois, after any remarks he wishes to make, we will not take further action on this amendment today. The Senator from Illinois may have an amendment to this amendment. He may simply debate against and speak against the passage of this amendment. He prefers to do that tomorrow. At least informally, I will undertake that it will be the first subject taken up tomorrow. I am not certain I can give him absolute assurance of that, but I believe it should be the first subject taken up tomorrow, the debate to take place on it, and the positions of the Senator from Illinois presented.

There are other Members of the body who may also wish to amend this amendment. This amendment is central to this overall debate. Once we have completed action on this amendment, I suspect most of the other amendments to the bill will require much less time and will be much less controversial.

In any event, the background to the high density rule that is the central subject of this amendment is this: In 1968, that is to say, 31 years ago, the Federal Aviation Administration established a regulation to address serious congestion and delay problems at

five of the nation's airports. That regulation, known as the high density rule and implemented in 1969, governed the allocation of capacity at Chicago O'Hare, Washington National, and JFK, LaGuardia, and Newark airports in the New York City area. Newark was later exempted from the rule, so it now applies only to four airports.

The high density rule allocates capacity at the four airports by imposing limits on the number of operations (takeoffs or landings) during certain periods of the day. The authority to conduct a single operation during those periods is commonly referred to as a "slot."

The Gorton/Rockefeller amendment consolidates all of the negotiated agreements to lift the high density rule, the slot rule, at Chicago O'Hare, LaGuardia, and JFK, and to ease the high density rule and the perimeter rule restrictions at Reagan National.

With respect to Chicago O'Hare, the amendment would eliminate the high density rule at O'Hare, effective April 1, 2003.

Regional jets and turboprops would be exempt from slot requirements effective January 1, 2000, for service to airports with fewer than 2 million annual enplanements. There are two additional conditions that would have to be met before carriers could take advantage of this interim regional jet/turboprop exemption. First, there could be no more than one carrier already providing nonstop service to that airport from O'Hare. Second, the exemption would only be available for new service in the market, such as when a carrier is adding a frequency to the applicable market, or upgrading the aircraft that provides its existing service in the market from a turboprop to a regional jet.

Regional jets would be defined as aircraft having between 30 and 50 seats.

Limited incumbent air carriers would also be exempt from the slot requirements at O'Hare, effective January 1, 2000. The terms "new entrant" and "limited incumbent" air carrier are often used interchangeably. Limited incumbent air carriers are currently defined as those carriers that hold or operate 12 or fewer slots at a high density airport. The Gorton/Rockefeller amendment would redefine limited incumbents as those carriers that hold or operate 20 or fewer slots at a high density airport. The limited incumbent would be exempt from the high density rule only if they were providing new service, or service that they were not already providing in a market.

The Department of Transportation would be required to monitor the flights that are operated without slots under the exemption from the high density rule. If a carrier was operating a flight that did not meet the specified criteria, the Department of Transportation would be required to terminate the authority for that flight.

O'Hare is currently slot controlled from 6:45 a.m. to 9:15 p.m. The amendment would reduce the slot controlled window at O'Hare from 2:45 p.m. to 8:15 p.m., effective April 1, 2002.

International service to O'Hare would be exempt from the slot requirements beginning April 1, 2000, except for foreign carriers where reciprocal access to foreign airports for United States carriers is not available.

Carriers would be required to continue serving small hub and nonhub airports where the carrier "provides air transportation of passengers . . . on or before the date of enactment" of the bill using slot exemptions. This period of required service at O'Hare would last until March 31, 2007. A carrier could get out from under these requirements if it could demonstrate to DOT that it is losing money on the route.

The amendment would terminate the high density rule at LaGuardia and JFK, effective calendar year 2007.

Regional jets would be eligible for slot exemptions for service to airports with fewer than two million annual enplanements. There are two additional conditions that would have to be met before carriers could get a regional jet slot exemption. First, there could be no more than one carrier already providing nonstop service to that airport from LaGuardia or JFK. Second, the exemption would only be available for new service in the market, such as when a carrier is adding a frequency to the applicable market, or upgrading the aircraft that provides its existing service in the market from a turbo-prop to a regional jet.

Regional jets would be defined as aircraft having between 30 and 50 seats.

Limited incumbent air carriers would also be eligible for slot exemptions at LaGuardia and JFK. Limited incumbent air carriers are currently defined as those carriers that hold or operate 12 or fewer slots at a high density airport. The Gorton/Rockefeller amendment would redefine limited incumbents as those carriers that hold or operate 20 or fewer slots at a high density airport.

The amendment would ease the current criteria that enable new entrant/limited incumbent air carriers to acquire slot exemptions. The Department of Transportation is currently authorized to grant these slot exemptions when to do so would be in the public interest, and when circumstances are exceptional. On most occasions, DOT has interpreted the "exceptional circumstances" criterion to mean that there is no nonstop service in the route proposed to be served. In other words, DOT would grant an exemption only when there is no service between the city proposed to be served and the high density airport. The amendment would eliminate the "exceptional circumstances" criterion.

The amendment would establish a 45-day turnaround for all slot exemption

applications submitted to the Department of Transportation. If the Department does not act on the application within 45 days, it would be deemed to be approved and consequently the carrier could initiate the proposed service.

Carriers would be required to continue serving small hub and nonhub airports where the carrier "provides air transportation of passengers * * * on or before the date of enactment" of the bill using slot exemptions. This period of required service at LaGuardia and JFK would last until calendar year 2009. A carrier could get out from under these requirements if it could demonstrate to DOT that it is losing money on the route.

Next Reagan National. The amendment would establish 12 perimeter rule/slot exemptions for service beyond the 1,250-mile perimeter. To qualify for beyond-perimeter exemptions, the proposed service would have to provide domestic network benefits or increase competition by new entrant air carriers.

The amendment would establish 12 slot exemptions for service within the perimeter. Carriers could only apply to serve medium hubs or smaller airports from Reagan National.

The amendment would establish a 45-day turnaround for all slot exemption and perimeter rule exemption applications submitted to the Department of Transportation. If the Department does not act on the application within 45 days, it would be deemed to be approved and consequently the carrier could initiate the proposed service.

On another subject, safety and delays, the Department of Transportation concluded in a 1995 report entitled, "Report to the Congress: A Study of the High Density Rule", that changing the high density rule will not affect air safety. According to DOT, today's sophisticated traffic management system limits demand to operationally safe levels through a variety of air traffic control programs and procedures that are implemented independently of the limits imposed by the high density rule. The Department report makes assurances that Air Traffic Control, ATC, will continue to apply these programs and procedures for ensuring safety regardless of what happens to the high density rule.

Many improvements have been made in infrastructure and air traffic management in the 30 years since the high density rule was first implemented, which should allow for additional operations without additional delays.

Improvements on the ground, including high speed runway turnouts, additional taxiways, and larger holding areas at the ends of the runways allow more efficient utilization of the gates and ground facilities and thus increase the capacity at high density airports.

Enroute, approach and departure air traffic management improvements

have increased the air space capacity above high density airports.

In 1968 there were no "flow control" measures. Aircraft stacked up in the air rather than being planned and routed for arrival. Modern ATC flow control has significantly increased the air-space capacity, while improving safety.

Greater precision radar has decreased aircraft spacing requirements, thus increasing capacity without sacrificing safety. Further improvements are expected with the existing Global Positioning System, GPS, Technology, allowing for additional capacity increases.

Future initiatives at Chicago's O'Hare and New York's LaGuardia and JFK will permit growth without undue operational delays.

Airspace redesign, essentially the rethinking of the approach, departure and routing of aircraft, was proven effective in a recent pilot project a Dallas-Fort Worth. Redesign efforts are currently underway for the Chicago area and other airports.

Other FAA programs, such as RNAV (area navigation) and the National Route Program, already in use in some locations, will further enhance enroute and terminal capacity.

Technology improvements such as digital data transfer between controllers and pilots, automation tools for managing traffic flows, and precision location devices such as GPS will greatly increase capacity throughout the national airspace system.

The recent ATC problems were due in part to the unique combination of adverse weather and the introduction of new systems at key airports. The gradual phaseout of the high density rule will allow time to fix these problems, and for the growth in capacity to match the increased air traffic control capability.

The amendment allows 7 years before the slot rule is removed for the New York airports, and more than 3 years for Chicago. This phaseout allows adequate time for the FAA's initiatives to be in place.

Even if there is some increase in delays, in both Chicago and New York, competitive nearby airports such as Midway and Islip provide a natural safety valve.

Many new entrant carriers operating point-to-point have found that using nearby secondary airports is a profitable way to offer service to major cities. If delays and the associated costs do increase in Chicago and New York's major airports, more operations will naturally move to these secondary airports.

Madam President, that is an explanation both of the details of this amendment and the rationale for the amendment. Again, in connection with the bill as a whole, this represents the level of partnership between Senator

ROCKEFELLER and myself, but as broad consultation and as much agonizing discussion over the details as can possibly be imagined under circumstances on a subject so important.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia is recognized.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Madam President, I fully agree with my colleague from Washington. In fact, I have a whole series of pages about various States, various airports, various Senators, and the problems they had—and in one case may still have—with whom we worked out agreements. This was a very arduous process.

An airport is a very large employer when one is talking about the number of planes that can fly in and fly out. Every flight, in fact, represents two slots, a landing and a takeoff. It was a very controversial subject. This is probably the most controversial subject, but we worked a long time to try to work this out. We did it, as the Senator indicated, with an expedited review process in certain places, we did it in good faith, we did it slowly, and we did it over a period of time. We did it, we thought, trying to accommodate as much as possible the needs of individual Senators who, quite naturally, take these things particularly seriously. The Presiding Officer and I wish we had problems of this sort, but for those who do, it is a real problem. We recognized that, and we tried to deal with it in a fair manner.

First, I will not give the full explanation my colleague did, but I will say it is carefully crafted, it is based on compromise, and it balances both the questions of congestion and of noise. There are those who feel strongly about both or one or the other in various proportions. Obviously, all of them represent high-density airports, although it should be said there are a lot more than four high-density airports. Atlanta, for example, is neck and neck with O'Hare in terms of its density, but is not included in the high-density treatment.

I thought the handling of Reagan National was good because we went from 48 slots to 24 slots; 12 outside the perimeter and 12 inside the perimeter. That is good for the Presiding Officer and the present speaker because that allows more entrants into National, and that is desirable.

It also is a fact that this was in the original bill, and it was retained in the substitute. That speaks to something within the authorizing context. In other words, people on the Commerce Committee overwhelmingly believed this was a very important and fair treatment.

We did not make the treatment of every airport exactly the same in terms of the phasing out of the high density rule because not every airport is the same. We did not do it as a collection of our own air genius or mathe-

matical equations; we did it because the FAA advised us very carefully as to what we ought to do on that according to their best calculations. The idea was, instead of gradually phasing out the high density rule altogether, to, rather, establish some interim rules to allow small communities—this is a very important point—to allow small communities and to allow new entrants to get a head start on this process.

If you come from rural America and if you believe in a competitive market system, that becomes extremely important. Small communities do get a head start to add flights and fill capacity in this compromise which has been worked out.

I have explained the Reagan Airport situation.

The amendment, again, specifically protects service to small communities—which is of interest to many of us—under slot exemptions that were previously granted by the Department of Transportation.

It requires that airlines continue the service until 4 years after the lifting of the high density rule at O'Hare—until the year 2007—and 2 years after the lifting of the high density rule at Kennedy and LaGuardia for that purpose.

Understandably, some Members were very concerned. When we began to talk about this, they were very worried it would come off that the airlines, therefore, would have no incentive to keep any of their business in smaller communities or in smaller markets; that they could simply pick up their slots and take them elsewhere.

This amendment prevents them from doing that. It prevents them from abandoning these markets unless, as Senator GORTON indicated, they can prove to the Department of Transportation—which will be under the majority of this body, which is rural or part rural in nature; a lot of pressure—that they are suffering, as they say, substantial losses on these routes. So that is a clear effort to protect service for small communities, and that is something which I value very much.

As Senator GORTON also explained, this amendment expands the definition of a "limited incumbent." These carriers are already serving one of the four high-density airports, but do so with only a very few number of flights. This was of particular value to many of our Midwestern colleagues. There are a whole series of them who, I think, are quite happy as a result of this.

The new definition will give more low-fare, new-entrant carriers access to these major airports. Again, I go back to the philosophy of all of this that, after all, we do have 15, 18 major airports in the country, but fundamentally we are a hub-and-spoke system. And the Presiding Officer and the junior Senator from West Virginia come from States that are spokes; we are not hubs. We never will be. We depend upon

carriers that are in the hubs coming out, as they compete in this most competitive of all businesses—in our market system—to compete for new passengers. So they, in classic fashion, have to increasingly come out into the rural areas to draw passengers into their hubs. There will be an amendment about the nature of these hubs to attract them, so they can put them into the bloodstream, so to speak, the flow stream of their business.

In my opening statement, when I talked about the enormous increase in new regional jets which will be taking place in the next number of years, that is one of the reasons the number of these regional jets will be increasing—because they are being sent from hubs out to the smaller areas to pick up passengers, to bring them into the larger hub airports, and then going on to wherever they wish from there.

One very important thing. I am not sure the Senator from Washington said this or not; he probably did, knowing him. There is an important caveat for any change in the high density rule. This is not just something the Congress has such power to decide that we just abrogate or pretend the FAA does not have ultimate understanding of what constitutes safety in a system.

The FAA retains the ultimate authority for air traffic operations, and they have the ability to step in because of safety or delay. They can intervene. They can intervene when they think there is a problem or a crisis. And they can do so on a unilateral basis.

In addition, I might add, both the General Accounting Office and a number of economists, over a lot of years, have pointed out that slot rules, in effect, act as a major barrier to airline competition. That new entry at four airports—there are a lot of people who cannot get into those airports because of the slot rule. Again, the FAA would have to maintain the sureness of safety, and the rest of it, but you want people to be able to get in and out of airports.

As to new technology, if we would only make available the money, they have all kinds of new ways now of charting courses for airplanes, be they commercial or private, which allow a more efficient use of airspace, which we cannot now do because we do not have the technology. Each computer in all of these many centers across the country does not have the ability to differentiate the altitudes or whatever some of the other details are that allow the plotting of air courses. So there is room for more, and in not only the four high-density airports but also generally speaking.

Then, finally, this amendment does require noise studies. Noise is a factor. Noise is not the only factor in life, but it is a factor. It gives priority to high-density airports. There is the allocation of money for those noise abatement studies.

So I think it is a very good amendment. It certainly is a long-worked-at amendment. I urge my colleagues to join in the adoption of this amendment.

I thank the Presiding Officer and yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington is recognized.

Mr. GORTON. Madam President, does the Senator from Illinois wish to make any remarks now or should we just go on to another subject?

Mr. FITZGERALD. Madam President, if I could just take a moment now, I say to the Senator from Washington, I would be happy to take my time tomorrow when we consider the amendment on lifting the high density rule. But if I could just reiterate my opposition to lifting the high density rule.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois is recognized.

Mr. FITZGERALD. As was noted earlier, the FAA imposed the high density rule back in the late 1960s. It was an internal FAA rule. I guess I am a little perplexed as to why Congress would come in and rewrite, with statute, an FAA rule.

If the FAA thinks it is a good idea to lift the slot rules at O'Hare, if they think it is safe to do that, they are confident it will not add to any delays at the most congested, most delay-filled airport in the country, then the FAA can go in and do that. So I guess the threshold issue is, I am perplexed why we would come in and write a statute that overrides a Federal Aviation Administration rule.

I do believe, while the proponents of this proposal have good intentions; they would like to increase competition and access to the Chicago market; and certainly it could be argued that would benefit the whole Nation and could even benefit Chicago—a basic law of physics says that you cannot have two objects occupying the same space at one time.

Right now, O'Hare, which has over 900,000 operations a year, is already at capacity. The FAA commissioned a study in 1995. That study concluded that the absolute maximum number of flights or operations one could have at O'Hare in an hour was 158. Today, we are at 163 operations at O'Hare in an hour. This proposal before the Senate is to lift any restrictions at all.

A flight lands and takes off every 20 seconds at O'Hare. If we want to cram more flights into O'Hare International Airport, are we going to close that 20 seconds that divides each flight going in and out of O'Hare? What is a safe amount of time? Ten seconds between flights? How would you like to be coming in 10 seconds behind the plane in front of you with another flight 10 seconds behind you? Would you feel safe flying that jumbo jet in that compact air space?

Going into O'Hare right now, one can look in every direction and see planes lined up as far as the eye can see waiting to land at O'Hare. In the morning hours at O'Hare, there are typically as many as 100 flights waiting to take off.

I hope the Members of this body will give thought to what we are doing. With this lifting of the high density rule, we are saying it is safe to cram more flights into the most congested airport in the country; that it is not endangering the safety of the flying public and that it won't add delays.

I never did take physics in high school. I have to admit it. I was a classics major. I majored in Latin and Greek. I took a lot of humanities courses and my great interest was not science. But I am going to be interested to hear whether there is some scientific evidence that we can keep packing more and more flights into the most congested, dense, delay-filled, crowded air traffic space in the world. I will be interested to learn why other Members of this body think that is a good policy and why it would be safe.

With that, I look forward to being afforded the opportunity to speak on this matter tomorrow. I thank the distinguished Senators from West Virginia and the State of Washington for conferring with me this afternoon. I look forward to being given the time to address this matter to the full Senate body tomorrow. Hopefully, at that time, more of my colleagues will have arrived, many of whom will have passed through O'Hare and probably some, quite a few, who will have incurred delays on their way passing through O'Hare.

I thank the Chair and yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mr. GORTON. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that all first-degree amendments to S. 82 be filed at the desk by 10 a.m. tomorrow, Tuesday, with all other provisions of the consent agreement of September 30 still in effect. This has been cleared on all sides.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 1893

(Purpose: To amend title 49, United States Code, to authorize management reforms of the Federal Aviation Administration, and for other purposes)

Mr. GORTON. Madam President, I send an amendment to the desk for Senator ROCKEFELLER and myself, and I ask unanimous consent that the pending amendment be set aside so we may consider this one.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The clerk will report the amendment.

The legislative assistant read as follows:

The Senator from Washington [Mr. GORTON], for himself and Mr. ROCKEFELLER, proposes an amendment numbered 1893.

Mr. GORTON. I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(The text of the amendment is printed in today's RECORD under "Amendments Submitted.")

Mr. GORTON. Madam President, last Friday, I joined my friend and colleague, Senator ROCKEFELLER, in introducing S. 1682. This measure is the culmination of input from a broad range of aviation interests. Senator ROCKEFELLER and I have been holding a series of meetings with industry representatives searching for input on how we can make a positive legislative impact on the current air traffic control system.

Three common themes emerged from these meetings: First, there will be a crisis in the aviation industry if we continue to experience the delays that plagued the system this summer. Second, the Federal Aviation Administration is doing a better job of responding to these problems under Administrator Garvey. The third point is, incremental changes are probably the best approach to take in reforming the system, as much as the Senator from West Virginia and I might very well prefer a more drastic reform.

The amendment we have just introduced is the text of that S. 1682.

Madam President, by now I am sure you have heard the analogy that fixing the air traffic control system is similar to trying to change a flat tire while traveling down the highway at 60 miles per hour. While I don't view the problem as being that daunting, I certainly think we can use a few good mechanics to help get the FAA back on the right track. I think the legislation Senator ROCKEFELLER and I have introduced is a step in the right direction. While I am in favor of an end result that goes much further, positive action is needed. At this time, we cannot let the perfect be the enemy of the good.

Our approach would attack the problem from the management side. It is no secret that the FAA has a history of problems controlling costs and schedules on large-scale projects. We hope the creation of the chief operating officer position, with responsibility for running and modernizing our air traffic control system, will inject the necessary discipline into that system. S. 1682, the current amendment, would also create a subcommittee of the Management Advisory Committee to oversee air traffic control services. Of course, in order for there to be a subcommittee of the MAC, we must first have an MAC. I am assured by the FAA that the Management Advisory Committee will be appointed soon. Let me assure you that this subcommittee chairman will not look favorably on any further delays on this question.

As we prepare to move into the 21st century, the NAS must be prepared to

meet the challenges of increasing demand on an already strained system. A blueprint for this system should be a top priority for the FAA. S. 1682, this amendment, authorizes \$12 million a year for the FAA to develop a long-term plan to provide direction. The most radical portion of this bill and the amendment deal with an innovative financing pilot project. This provision would set up a mechanism to establish public-private joint ventures to purchase air traffic control equipment. Ten projects for ATC modernization equipment will be selected, \$5 million per project, with a total cap of \$500 million. FAA seed money would be leveraged, along with money and input from the airports and airlines, more quickly to purchase and field ATC modernization equipment.

As I stated earlier, this is not the final solution to our air traffic control system woes. We hope, however, that this will be the first step in a long journey to ensure Americans continue to enjoy the safest, most efficient aviation system in the world. I urge my colleagues to join me in support of this amendment.

An oversight committee for air traffic control: The bill and the amendment provide the FAA Administrator with authority to create a subcommittee of the current Management Advisory Committee, a 15-member panel appointed by the President, with the advice and consent of the Senate, to oversee air traffic control services.

A COO for air traffic: The bill and the amendment create a new chief operating officer position with responsibility for running and modernizing air traffic control services, developing and implementing strategic and operational plans, and the budget for air traffic services. The COO reports to and serves at the pleasure of the Administrator for a 5-year term. Compensation is comparable to the Administrator's but with the possibility of up to a 50-percent performance bonus at the discretion of the Administrator.

Performance bonus for the FAA Administrator: The bill and the amendment provide a performance bonus for the FAA Administrator at the discretion of the Secretary of Transportation of up to 50 percent of the Administrator's salary.

National Airspace Review and Redesign: The bill and the amendment mandate a review and redesign of the entire country's airspace. They authorize \$12 million per year to carry out the project, require industry and State input, and impose periodic reporting.

Cost allocation milestones report: The bill and the amendment require the FAA to provide a report on the progress it is making on the cost allocation system.

ATC joint venture: The bill and the amendment set up a mechanism to establish public-private joint ventures to

purchase air traffic control equipment. Ten projects for air traffic control modernization equipment will be selected, \$50 million per project, with a total cap of \$500 million. FAA seed money will be leveraged, along with money and input from the airports and airlines, more quickly to purchase and field ATC modernization equipment. A portion of the passenger facility charge, 25 cents, could also be used for financing.

That is a brief explanation of the bill and, of course, of this amendment. The Senator from West Virginia and I believe we will probably be able to accept this amendment by a voice vote tomorrow. But we do want it before the body at the present time, so that if anybody has any questions about it or about any of the provisions of the amendment, they may contact us before the proposal comes back up tomorrow. My present intention would be to bring this up for discussion and vote after we have disposed of the early amendment on slots and any amendments to that amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia is recognized.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Madam President, I agree with everything my colleague from Washington has said. I should say that he and I began working on this amendment in earnest a number of months ago when we were in the midst of the summer and the headlines were full of all the problems of the air traffic control system, which were becoming manifest to anybody reading a newspaper, watching television, or listening to the radio.

When I use the word "troubled" to describe our air traffic system, I need to be very careful and clear because the FAA, our air traffic controllers, the pilots, and flight attendants in this country have had an air safety record that is extraordinary. It is not only safe but it is a very secure air traffic operation. So people say: Fine. Then why worry about the future?

As I explained in my opening statement, the future is going to bring double, or triple, or quadruple virtually everything—whether it is air cargo, letters, passengers, numbers of aircraft, international traffic, and the rest of it.

Let me assure my colleagues that the word "troubled" is not about safety, although we always have to keep our eye on that, but it is about productivity, about capacity, about efficiency, about outdated equipment, about insufficient runways, and insufficient runways that are insufficiently distant from one another; if there happen to be two, or if they happen to be parallel, you can't use them efficiently to land two airplanes at the same time. It is about surging traffic demand, about fractured organizational structure, and it is about us in the Congress; it is about a highly unpredictable, highly irregular process of funding.

Funding the FAA and its air traffic control operation is not at all unlike running IBM or Dell Computer. You are meant to have a business plan, a 5-year outlay of budget, and you are meant to know what kind of equipment you can buy 1 year from now, 2 years from now, 3 years from now, so you can begin to prepare for that. We in this Congress, have specialized in declining to make that ability available to the people who fly 2 million of our people around every day. So what Senator GORTON and I have done today is not to offer, as he indicated, dramatic reform or restructuring of the FAA, because we know there is a lot to be worked through, that it would be premature to do that today.

In fact, on the floor of this body and in the Halls of this Congress, there is very little discussion, if any, on what ought to be discussed at great length about the FAA—about equipment, about computers, about what is the state of stress, or lack of stress, for the people who are in our towers, whom both the Senator from Washington and I have visited.

So we are trying to decide how best to proceed on FAA restructuring, and we have decided to try to get as much consensus from the Congress and industry and across the Nation as we can. Now, some believe we should create an independent FAA, a privatized FAA. Some believe we should privatize air traffic altogether. Some believe user fee funding is the key to improving efficiency. Some believe the FAA is slow and cumbersome because it is a Federal agency. And some believe they are kind of on the right track already, so why intervene—again, no catastrophic actions.

In any event, despite the fact that we are not ready to enact—Senator GORTON and I—a so-called big-bang solution, in no way is there reason to do nothing. It is to take steps to make air traffic control next year better than this year or next year for the FAA to be better than this year. It is clear that the FAA needs interim reform and interim direction and encouragement. So as the Senator indicated, we are offering a package of incremental reforms that will, in a sense, send the FAA both the tools and the message to improve current management and operation of the system without prejudging what the final long-term broad change might be.

The Air Traffic Improvement Act of 1999 is focused in two key areas, as my colleague discussed. The first is internal FAA management reforms, and the second is modernization of equipment and technology. Both are enormously important. On the management side, the bill builds on reforms enacted in 1996. It uses the management advisory committee, or MAC as it is called, which I will have to say the administration has not set records in putting

in place, i.e., they have not. But they have said they are going to send the nominations for it very soon and designate a subcommittee to advise and oversee air traffic control services.

We create in this amendment a chief operating officer position, and that is very important. There isn't any corporation of any size that doesn't have that kind of person. You have the person who runs it, the CEO, and you might have the chief financial officer, but you always have a chief operating officer. We don't. The FAA has 55,000 people for whom it is responsible. That is a very large corporation. We believe that, together, the chief operating officer and the ATC Subcommittee will have central responsibility for running and modernizing air traffic control, developing a strategic plan, and implementing it.

I personally have enormous respect for the FAA and believe in and trust in the judgment, instincts, and actions of our Administrator, Jane Garvey. I think she is absolutely first class. I have spent a lot of time with her and talked a lot with her. She ran Boston airport. If you run Boston airport, you know what you are doing. She knows what she is doing. She has a strategic way of thinking. She listens a lot. She is around the country visiting people a great deal. We are very lucky to have her. But putting together a budget for air traffic services is very important and calls for a chief operating officer.

Having said that, let me say the Administrator will continue to always have the final say and always the accountability for air traffic. This is not a dilution of responsibility; it is simply making an organization more efficient, with no dilution of responsibility for the Administrator. We have to make sure we can attract and maintain the highest caliber leadership in our system. Again, I make the comparison to IBM or Dell Computer, which are very large corporations. Public service does not pay very well.

Senator GORTON and I believe it is very important that we have the highest caliber and that we retain the highest caliber leadership in running our system. That means including the possibility of a performance bonus for the chief operating officer and for the FAA Administrator at the discretion of the Secretary of Transportation. That is a very important point. Some people will say: Oh, that is going to be more salary.

Again, I remind you that there are 50,000 people, 2 million passengers, and all of these airplanes going all over the country. I have a chart, which I will not hold up because I don't believe in displaying charts on the Senate floor. I never have, and I hope I never do. But if I did, I would show you a chart which is basically the entire United States colored in red. The red is made up of very fine, little red lines, each one rep-

resenting a flight. At a specific hour of a specific day—if you pick, for example, 5 o'clock in the morning, I am not one who would eagerly seek the opportunity to fly at 5 o'clock in the morning, but there are many Americans who do—if you look even at the west coast, it is colored red. If you look at 8 o'clock in the morning, you might as well forget anything in the country other than the color red.

I raise the suspicion that they must have left out West Virginia because we don't have a lot of flights at 5 o'clock or 8 o'clock in West Virginia. The point was made in clear logic that these are planes that are flying over the State of West Virginia and perhaps the State of Maine in the process.

In any event, I believe in the idea, when you have a system that is complicated requiring that much technology, requiring that much efficiency, and requiring planning, that you get and you retain the best people possible. That means, in my judgment, and in Senator GORTON's judgment, the possibility of a performance bonus for the chief operating officer and the FAA Administrator.

The bill also makes clear that the Administrator should use her full authority to make organizational changes to improve the efficiency of the system and the effectiveness of the agency. That is kind of a bland sentence, but within it is a lot of power.

It is a little bit similar to HCFA. I have dealt now with I don't know how many HCFA Administrators. But they all say: Just give me four or five good lieutenants and I will be able to control this agency. They all failed because there are 4,000 health care experts in HCFA who look upon each HCFA Administrator as somebody who is going to be there for 2 years, and they are usually right; and be gone within 2 years, and they are usually right; that they will be there forever, and they are usually right. They know about health care. But they choose not to make decisions rapidly or efficiently. That means the Administrator and the chief operating officer, if we have one, need to have a lot more authority in a sense to shake up the system.

Senator GORTON and I would encourage that because we think that efficiency within the system is tremendously important. We set deadlines. We set milestones. We can't tell you right now in this country how much it costs for an airplane to fly from Boston, MA, to Dallas, TX. Ask us that question. Ask the FAA that question. How much does it cost? What is the cost of that flight? Nobody can give you an answer. That is inexcusable. This is one of the things that has to be done. It is one of the things that the FAA desperately wants to be able to do. What does it cost to run the air traffic control system in order to allow that flight to

take place? We need to know those answers so we can allocate these costs fairly among users.

That is a very important principle. Not all airlines are the same. Not all airlines use the same approaches or have the same number of people or charge the same. There are differences in what they pay. Their obligations to the system, in terms of financial input, have to be based upon what their costs are. Therefore, we need to know what those costs are.

With respect to air traffic modernization, the bill calls for a comprehensive review and design of our airspace on a nationwide basis. Are we using it effectively? Are there more creative ways of routing a plane safely? You can do that if you have new technology. They have the technology at Herndon, VA. But do they have it in all of the air traffic control centers across this country? The answer is no, they don't. Until they do, that is going to be hard.

But Senator GORTON and I have an obligation to push, to push the Congress and to push the Senate to want to focus on these problems: one, to care about these problems; and, second, to do something about this.

We have 29 million miles of national airspace. I don't know how many times that is around the world, but it is a lot. Twenty-nine million miles of airspace is an incredible amount. It is divided into more than 700 individually managed sectors. There are 25,000 of the 50,000 employees that I mentioned who use 575 facilities that run these individually managed sectors. And the air traffic control system manages 55,000 flights and almost 2 million passengers every day. That is an enormous management problem. In fact, it is quite a lot more difficult, I would think, than running Dell Computers or running IBM. Yes, they are international operations. I am talking about their national operations. There is so much more at stake. The life, the safety, the economy, and the convenience of passengers is what is at stake. There is so much more at stake in arranging for the planes to be flown safely and properly.

Having said all of this, of course, I add on, as I always should, that the capacity is going to double in the next decade. We are looking at an ever increasing problem. The FAA has already begun to redesign the process. They are not sitting around. They are working hard. They have established a dedicated airspace redesign office.

Thanks to Senator LAUTENBERG, they received \$3 million last year to get started with the redesign work in the New York airspace. That in itself is a national service because it is far and away the most congested airspace in the Nation. Is \$3 million going to do that even for the New York area? No, but again, it is a start. It is not the Big Bang theory. But \$3 million is enough

to get going. Once you start moving, then people start taking a little bit more notice.

We need a nationwide approach to this problem—not just in New York but across the country—rather than doing it on a piecemeal basis, especially since segmented thinking is considered by many, in fact, to be a part of the problem; that we do things by chunks or segments of the country rather than thinking of the country as a whole and how we can best provide a safe air carrier service for people, for packages, for letters, and the rest of it.

The amendment we have offered would do all of this. That makes me happy. It makes me feel that it is a very good amendment.

We direct the FAA to engage in comprehensive nationwide space redesign. We insist that there be industry and stakeholder input. Stakeholder is not shareholder necessarily. Stakeholder means people who ride on these airplanes. And we give them the resources they need to complete the work in a timely fashion.

To realize the full potential of an airspace redesign, we have to have all of the advanced air traffic control equipment in place. Of course, we don't. We are very slow in that today, partly because of the technology development and procurement problems the FAA needs to fix internally. We talk a lot with Jane Garvey about that. She is acutely aware of that and has been working to change that. It is partly because of the vagaries of Congress; that is, the Federal budget process. We are impossible. We have been through so many extensions of a couple of months. It is like we are going out of our way to drive the whole process of this planning and the FAA crazy.

That is why Senator GORTON and I are so glad we have these 2 days, hopefully, to even discuss this. A month and a half ago I wouldn't have bet that we would even be able to take this up this year. And we are. That is a gift to the nation, I think.

If we can't bring it up, then the FAA obviously cannot make budget changes. We are on our way. Our amendment puts in place what Senator GORTON referred to earlier, a new financing mechanism. This is a creative, good thing in this amendment. It is for more rapid purchase of sought-after air traffic control equipment. The amendment sets up a pilot program to facilitate public-private joint ventures for the purpose of buying air traffic control equipment. It is not for profit. It is the Air Traffic Modernization Association. It is a three-member executive panel representing the FAA, commercial carriers, and primary airports.

A lot of airports are very aggressive. I suspect there are several in the State of Maine that want to get going and are being held up. Maybe they have a little bit set aside. Perhaps they want

to use some of their passenger service fee. Maybe they want to take 25 cents of that and leverage it into a rather large purchase for some air traffic control equipment which, in their judgment, they need. This allows them to do that. Don't wait for the priority list to come to Bangor, ME, or Charleston, WV. If they have the gumption, they can save up or they can use part of the passenger service fee, say, 25 cents of it, and leverage it and buy modern equipment and jump ahead of the pack. That is what this is about.

Obviously, the FAA will continue to oversee that process. This will not be just a creative exercise by a few happy souls. All projects would have to be part of the FAA's capital plan. There is a cap of \$50 million in FAA funding per project. That is pretty good. Most won't use that much. Sponsoring airports can use a portion of their passenger facility charge to meet the commitment. I think that will be very important.

I am sure the Senator from Washington remembers, I got in great trouble on this side of the aisle. I talked with Jane Garvey, Liddy Dole, and others. They said they spent 25 percent of their time as FAA Administrators working solely on concessionaire problems and negotiation problems at Dulles and National. If that was an exaggeration, give them 5 percent. That is when I broke away from our pack and said set up an independent, quasi-public-private authority and let National and Dulles go to the bond market; they will certainly get triple-A rating. They certainly did. We can see what happened to both airports. Dulles will have to do it all over again because they are so successful.

That is what an airport needs to believe they can do. If an airline and its hub airport want new instrument landing equipment, six more precision runway monitors, and aren't on the FAA's list for that equipment or are still years away on the funding schedule, maybe they will decide to get together with the ATM Association on the proposal, the FAA will put up seed money and the airports will do the same. They go to the bond market, get financing for the whole project, and use 25 cents—the PFC charge—to pay for it over 5 or 10 years. That is a great idea.

I am excited about this approach as I am sure is obvious. We have only heard positive feedback from all parties—the industry and the airport community. They say, given the change, they are ready to go if we pass the amendment.

Finally, the Air Traffic Management Improvement Act also includes authorization up to \$100 million to speed up purchases and fielding of modernization equipment and technologies. I am happy to note we have dropped that provision because of the agreement reached with the majority—thank you to the majority—to increase authoriza-

tion for FAA equipment and facilities by \$500 million annually.

We are on the move if we pass this. Over time, we will have to spend even more of our Federal dollars on air traffic control and modernization effort. I know we will be considering some ideas for solving FAA's budgetary problems when we go to conference.

I—and I suspect I differ with my friend and colleague across the aisle from me—am supportive of Congressman SHUSTER's idea of off-budget. I don't think we can mess around with this situation; it is fraught with danger, and catastrophe is around the corner if we are not willing to spend the money we need to spend. We did it with the highway trust fund. We can put up a firewall, do it off-budget. There are ways to do it. A person can go to some of the air traffic control facilities and see what they are doing, see the stress under which they are working. We have 2 million people in the air, and we want them to be safe.

I am glad we are able to make a strong, tangible commitment to the needs of the system. I think these problems are all shared. We all bear some responsibility for them. We all need to step up to the plate to fix them. The FAA does a very commendable job with a very difficult task. They have a terrific safety record to show for it. I don't want to press their luck, ours, or the system's. The system, as it stands now, is not working as well as it could be or as it ought to be. We can't wait to do something about it.

I yield the floor.

Mr. GORTON. Madam President, we have now a unanimous consent agreement pursuant to which all amendments must be filed by 10 a.m. tomorrow. We appreciate the managers being apprised of those amendments to determine whether or not we can agree with some of them, unchanged or with modifications. We will probably go back to the fundamental amendment on slots to which the Senator from Illinois has objected and to which at least one Senator from Virginia, if not other Senators, have amendments to propose first thing tomorrow when we return to this bill.

If, however, there are amendments that can be agreed to relatively quickly, we may do that later on this evening after the votes at 5:30.

We will not debate either the Department of Transportation appropriations bill or nominations, so Members can come with amendments to this bill until 5:30 this afternoon. If they do, we will attempt to deal with them. If they don't, we will begin tomorrow. I know the leadership and certainly the managers of the bill want to finish this bill some time tomorrow.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BAUCUS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BAUCUS. Madam President, what is the pending business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The pending question is amendment No. 1893 offered by the Senator from Washington, Mr. GORTON, for himself, Senator ROCKEFELLER, and others.

Mr. BAUCUS. I ask unanimous consent that the pending amendment be temporarily laid aside.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 1898

(Purpose: To require the reporting of the reasons for delays or cancellations in air flights)

Mr. BAUCUS. Madam President, I send an amendment to the desk and ask for its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the amendment.

The bill clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Montana [Mr. BAUCUS] proposes an amendment numbered 1898.

Mr. BAUCUS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment is as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following new section:

SEC. . REPORTING OF REASONS FOR DELAYS OR CANCELLATIONS IN AIR FLIGHTS.

In addition to the information required to be included in each report filed with the Office of Airline Information of the Department of Transportation under section 234.4 of title 14, Code of Federal Regulations (as in effect on the date of enactment of this Act), each air carrier subject to the reporting requirement shall specify the reasons for delays or cancellations in all air flights to and from all airports for which the carrier provides service during the period covered by the report.

Mr. BAUCUS. Madam President, I am offering today an amendment to address what I believe is a complicated and growing problem for all Americans—flight delays and flight cancellations.

The problem is not that delays and cancellations occur. Of course they do. That is only natural. But with different weather conditions, and with the country as large and complicated as it is, and airlines trying to maintain a tight schedule, it is only obvious that schedule can sometimes be deeply affected—by weather or equipment problems—so we must expect occasional delays and occasional cancellations.

Right now, it is always a mystery why these delays and cancellations happen. We can guess. We can conjecture. Perhaps it is because of weather. Perhaps it is because of mechanical problems. Perhaps it is the fault of air traffic controllers. There are lots of reasons. But nobody knows—at least

the public does not know—precisely the reasons for these delays and for these cancellations.

Why is that? It is very simple. The airlines do not have to tell you. There is no requirement. So when you are stuck in an airport in the middle of the night, the airlines might let you know what is going on or they might not tell you. And after you finally reach your destination there's a pretty good chance that you are never going to know why it was you were stranded thousands of miles away from home, or why you missed that important business meeting. The airlines are not required to tell you the reasons for the delays and cancellations.

You are probably wondering: Why does this matter? If you are stuck, you are stuck. So what is the big deal? What is the difference? The big deal is that it does matter. It does make a difference, a great deal of difference. Speed and efficiency are not only in the interest of the airline, they are also in the interest of all Americans in this modern society.

Time really is money. Flights are often canceled or delayed for economic reasons, and not for mechanical or weather-related reasons. And when these economic delays or cancellations occur, it's usually rural America that gets the short end of the stick.

This is no secret. Domestic airlines sometimes have delays not only for mechanical reasons, not only for reasons caused by air traffic controllers, not only for weather reasons, but for purely economic reasons. They do not want that plane to go because it is not filled up enough; it is not economical enough. The airlines do not have to tell you that.

I have the headline of an article written by Christene Meyers from the front page of the Billings Gazette last week. The headline reads: "Enduring Plane Misery, Montana Air Passengers Often Grounded by Economics."

Let me read you a hypothetical situation from the article, a situation that is not so hypothetical and is happening with increasing frequency:

You fly out of Los Angeles at 6:10 p.m., arriving at Salt Lake City at 9 p.m., a minute earlier than estimated. You are delighted and hurry to your gate, to catch the last flight to Billings.

It happens all the time.

You watch, astonished, as the Billings plane is moved from the gate. You're told that your flight is canceled. You're told that your plane has a mechanical problem.

How often have we heard "mechanical problems" given to us by the airlines as the problem?

Further investigation discloses that the "mechanical problem" business was untrue. Truth is your perfectly functional plane was appropriated for a larger market. There were fewer people going to Billings than going to San Diego. You overnight from Salt Lake City and arrive the next day in Billings—12½ hours late.

That is if you are lucky because very often the next plane is booked; the next flight after that is booked; the next flight after that is booked; the next flight after that is booked.

I am not giving you isolated instances; this happens often in Montana. Montana depends primarily on two major carriers. When a flight is canceled or excessively delayed, there are big consequences. That flight may have been your only chance to get in or out of Montana that day. Again, the plane is not there. It is canceled. You say: OK. Book me on the next flight the next day.

Sorry. It is all booked up. It is overbooked.

Book me on the next flight.

Sorry. Can't.

I have talked to people in my State who had to wait 4 days—4 days—at Salt Lake City waiting for the next available flight. The same occurs in Minneapolis. People tell me they are there with several other people trying to get on a plane from Salt Lake City, and they say: Well, gee, why can't we just rent a car? Can Delta Airlines pay for the car rental? We'll drive from Salt Lake City to our home in Bozeman.

No. Sorry. It is against airline policy to do that.

So people frequently have to take another flight to another city in Montana and then drive or make some other connection. That is not uncommon.

Further into this article, a Delta agent from Salt Lake states:

If we have 40 people waiting for a flight for Billings and 120 waiting to go to San Francisco, it's a no-brainer. . . . It costs less for us to put 30 people up and send them on to Billings than it does to send 100 California-bound people to a hotel.

It is economics. That is wrong. That is not fair. That is not right. If flights are canceled for economic reasons, passengers deserve to know the truth. Let's not fool ourselves. This is not just an inconvenience for rural America; it is much more than an inconvenience. There is also a very direct, strong economic impact.

As my home State of Montana, my neighbors in North and South Dakota and Wyoming and Idaho can attest, what business is going to relocate to an area where flight service is not reliable? It is a very basic question. There is a pretty obvious answer. Businesses around the country are going to think twice if reliable flight service cannot be guaranteed.

There are delays and cancellations in other parts of the country, but here is the difference. In other parts of the country, in urban parts of the country, there are other flights, there are other airlines; not so for Montana, for the Dakotas, and for Wyoming. There are not that many daily flights, and because the flights have less economic benefit, airlines often cancel flights for economic reasons; and it is not right.

Montana ranks near the bottom of per capita individual income right now. I am not saying it is because of airlines, but I am saying it is a factor which tends to discourage businesses from locating or expanding in Montana. How can we improve if we cannot guarantee a minimum standard of quality air service? This is not just a matter of inconvenience; it is a matter of jobs. It is a matter of income.

My amendment simply requires that airlines provide all flight information that they currently report and specify the reason why these flights were delayed or canceled. Today, airlines must provide to the Department of Transportation on a monthly basis if an airline flight is delayed, either on arrival or departure. They do not have to give the reasons. They have to disclose that fact.

So I am suggesting—not that they have to write a whole big book on the reasons for the cancellations or the reasons for the delays—that they just say why. What caused the cancellation? What caused the delay?

So in addition to the information shown on the left-hand side of this chart: the name of the airline; the flight number; the aircraft tail number; the origin and destination airport codes; and the date and day of week of flight—but that in addition—it can also indicate whether the cancellation or delay was caused by air traffic control, caused by mechanical failure or difficulty, caused by an act of God, caused by weather, or caused by economics.

It is a very simple amendment. It does not regulate airlines. It is not imposing new regulations; it is just simply a matter of disclosure—simply giving the reasons why an airline flight is delayed over 15 minutes or just outright canceled.

I realize that simply reporting the reasons for cancellations and delays is not going to stop the practice of delaying and canceling flights for economic reasons because airlines are businesses. They may still want to go ahead and cancel or delay a flight for economic reasons. But I do think the public has the right to know the reason for the cancellation or the delay.

If airlines have to start reporting the reasons for missed connections and disrupted lives, consumers will soon see that rural America is grounded so that the rest of the country can go about its business.

It may turn out that as a consequence there will be fewer cancellations for economic reasons. That is very much my hope, because for many parts of the country, particularly rural America, the airlines' actions are having a disproportionately adverse effect in parts of the country that don't have as much airline service as other parts of the country.

That is my amendment. I see one Senator on the floor. I do not know if

he will speak to it or not, but I don't see him jumping up in his chair.

Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the pending amendments be set aside.

AMENDMENT NO. 1899

(Purpose: To provide for designation of at least one general aviation airport from among the current or former military airports that are eligible for certain grant funds, and for other purposes)

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Madam President, I send an amendment to the desk and ask for its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from West Virginia [Mr. ROCKEFELLER], for Mr. LEVIN, for himself and Mr. ABRAHAM, proposes an amendment numbered 1899.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment is as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following new section:

SEC. . DESIGNATION OF GENERAL AVIATION AIRPORT.

Section 47118 is amended—

(1) in the second sentence of subsection (a), by striking "12" and inserting "15"; and
(2) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

"(g) DESIGNATION OF GENERAL AVIATION AIRPORT.—Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, at least one of the airports designated under subsection (a) may be a general aviation airport that is a former military installation closed or realigned under a law described in subsection (a)(1)."

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the amendment be agreed to and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment (No. 1899) was agreed to.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Madam President, for the RECORD, amendment No. 1899 was cleared by the majority.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. HELMS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

HURRICANE FLOYD RELIEF

Mr. HELMS. Madam President, it was on September 16 that Hurricane Floyd crashed into the North Carolina coast dumping 20 inches of rain that resulted in devastating floods. The region of Eastern North Carolina most affected was visited by another 4-6 inches of rain just a week later, making an already catastrophic situation even worse.

So I noted with great interest when President Clinton paid a visit to a group of elite international financiers at the annual World Bank and IMF meeting 13 days later (September 29) to make an important announcement. It was there that he disclosed with great fanfare his proposal to forgive 100 percent of the debt owed by some 40 foreign countries to the United States—and much of their debt owed indirectly to the U.S. through the World Bank and the IMF.

Thirteen days after Hurricane Floyd arrived, and when many communities in my state were still literally under water, President Clinton decided it was appropriate to make the following plea on behalf of debt relief to foreign governments—he said: “. . . I call on our Congress to respond to the moral and economic urgency of this issue, and see to it that America does its part. I have asked for the money and shown how it would be paid for, and I ask the Congress to keep our country shouldering its fair share of the responsibility.”

No wonder my constituents are puzzled as to why, in the words of John Austin of Tryon, North Carolina, “we can help everyone else—but not our own people.” North Carolinians understand instinctively that there is something odd about our national priorities when we have spent more—\$27.9 billion—on foreign aid in the past two years than the \$27.7 billion FEMA has expended in the past ten years. That's right: government aid through FEMA for such wide-ranging disasters as the Northridge earthquakes in California, Hurricane Andrew in South Florida and the catastrophic Midwestern floods doesn't even measure up to the past two years of foreign aid.

Now, I have been in constant communication with the Majority Leader, the Chairman of the Appropriations Committee, members on the other side of the aisle, and countless federal agencies seeking relief for thousands of North Carolinians who have been ruined by Hurricane Floyd. Helping these victims is the number one priority for those with whom I have spoken. And for the record, I am gratified by their cooperation and their determination to help.

With respect to the President's plan to forgive the debts of foreign governments, I remind Senators that every